

1. The power of pardon conferred by the Constitution upon the President is otherwise unlimited, and may be exercised at any time after the commission of a crime, either before legal proceedings are taken or during their pendency, or after conviction and judgment. *In re Garland*, 71 U.S. 333 (1866). Criminal contempt is included within the President's power to pardon. *Ex Parte Grossman*, 267 U.S. 87, 121-22 (1925).

Accordingly, the President's pardon, which General Flynn has accepted, moots this case. *United States v. Schaffer*, 240 F.3d 35, 38 (D.C. Cir. 2001). The pardon not only encompasses the Section 1001 charge that is the subject of the government's pending motion to dismiss (Doc. 198), but also any possible future perjury or contempt charge in connection with General Flynn's sworn statements and any other possible future charge that this Court or the court-appointed amicus has suggested might somehow keep this criminal case alive over the government's objection (e.g., a charge under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, Section 618(a), Title 22, United States Code, arising out of the facts set forth in the Statement of Offense). In short, the government's prior motion to dismiss, as well as all other pending motions in this case, are moot in light of the President's full and unconditional pardon to General Flynn. No further proceedings are necessary or appropriate, as the Court must immediately dismiss the case with prejudice. *Schaffer*, 240 F.3d at 38.

Counsel for the government has conferred with counsel for General Flynn. General Flynn has accepted the President's pardon. Counsel and General Flynn have reviewed and consented to this filing and its requested relief.

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL R. SHERWIN
Acting United States Attorney
NY Bar No. 4444188

KENNETH C. KOHL
Acting Principal Assistant U.S. Attorney

By: /s/ Jocelyn Ballantine
Jocelyn Ballantine
Assistant United States Attorney
CA Bar No. 208267
555 4th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dated: November 30, 2020
Attachment

Executive Grant of Clemency

DONALD J. TRUMP

President of the United States of America

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

BE IT KNOWN, THAT THIS DAY, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, PURSUANT TO MY POWERS UNDER ARTICLE II, SECTION 2, CLAUSE 1, OF THE CONSTITUTION, HAVE GRANTED UNTO

MICHAEL T. FLYNN

A FULL AND UNCONDITIONAL PARDON

for the charge of making false statements to Federal investigators, in violation of Section 1001, Title 18, United States Code, as charged in the Information filed under docket number 1:17-CR-00232-EGS in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia; for any and all possible offenses arising from the facts set forth in the Information and Statement of Offense filed under that docket number or that might arise, or be charged, claimed, or asserted, in connection with the proceedings under that docket number; for any and all possible offenses within the investigatory authority or jurisdiction of the Special Counsel appointed on May 17, 2017, including the initial Appointment Order No. 3915-2017 and subsequent memoranda regarding the Special Counsel's investigatory authority; and for any and all possible offenses arising out of facts and circumstances known to, identified by, or in any manner related to the investigation of the Special Counsel, including, but not limited to, any grand jury proceedings in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia or the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name and caused the seal of the Department of Justice to be affixed.



Done at the City of Washington in the District of Columbia this twenty-fifth day of November in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty and of the Independence of the United States the Two Hundred and Forty-fifth.

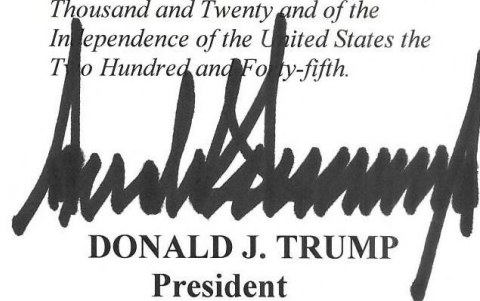

DONALD J. TRUMP
President

Exhibit 14

U.S. NEWS

Russians Paid Mike Flynn \$45K for Moscow Speech, Documents Show

The former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency earned more than \$50,000 from giving speeches RT and two other Russian companies.



— Russian President Vladimir Putin sits next to retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Michael Flynn as they attend an exhibition marking the 10th anniversary of RT (Russia Today) television news channel in Moscow on Dec. 10, 2015. Mikhail Klimentyev / Kremlin via Reuters, file

March 16, 2017, 2:38 PM EDT / Updated March 16, 2017, 2:38 PM EDT

By Ken Dilanian

The state-sponsored Russian television network RT paid former Defense Intelligence Agency head Mike Flynn more than \$45,000, plus perks, to speak at its 10 anniversary gala in December 2015, according to documents released by Democrats on the House Oversight Committee Thursday.

RT also paid to fly Flynn and his son to Moscow and put them up at a luxury hotel from December 9 to December 12, according to email exchanges between his speaker's bureau, Leading Authorities, and a representative of the network.

Flynn was interviewed by an RT correspondent onstage, and was famously seated at the same table as Russian President Vladimir Putin during dinner.

[Click Here to Read the Documents](#)

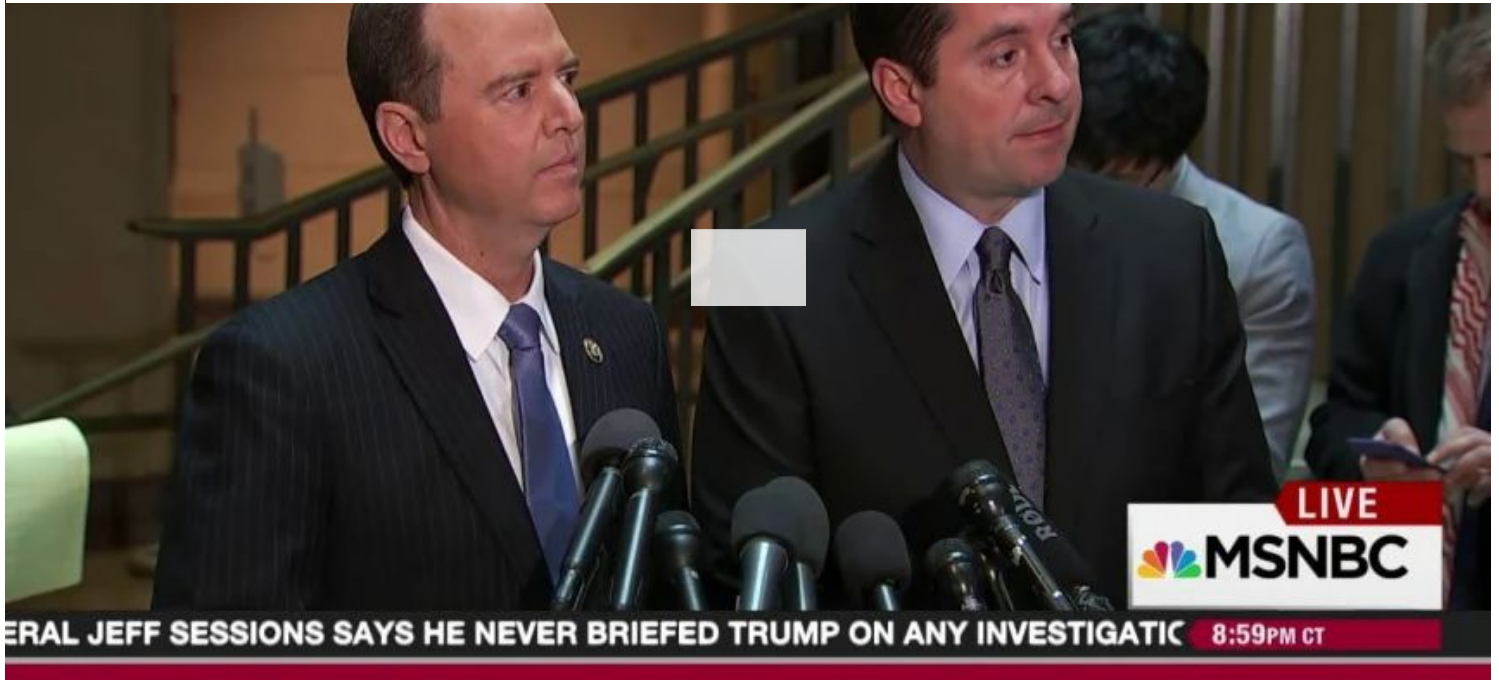
The fee negotiated by Leading Authorities was \$45,000 plus expenses, which was lower than the initial fee requested by the agency. Flynn's son accompanied him on the trip, and his expenses were also covered.

The documents released include a paycheck from Leading Authorities to Flynn for \$33,750.00, which was his fee for the speech after Leading Authorities deducted its 25 percent commission. RT also covered \$386 for the cost of visas.

While critics have suggested that the speaking fee was an attempt by Russia to influence Flynn, an email chain released by committee Democrats shows RT asking for a discount, and getting a quick 'yes' from Flynn's aide.

"Sorry it took us longer to get back to you" writes Alina Mikhaleva of RT on Nov. 9, 2015, "but the problem is that the speaking fee is a bit too high and exceeds our budget at the moment, so we had to negotiate it with the management. Do you think there is any possibility to reduce the price to 45K?"

House Intel seek Flynn investigation answers



The documents apparently show that Flynn gave two other speeches to the American divisions of Russian firms earlier in 2015. Volga Dnepr Airlines and the cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Government Security Solutions Inc. each paid Flynn \$11,250 after commission.

House Intelligence Committee Ranking Member Elijah Cumming, D.-Maryland sent a letter Thursday to President Trump, FBI Director James Comey, and Defense Secretary James Mattis that accused Flynn of "violating the Constitution ... by accepting tens of thousands of dollars from an agent of a global adversary that attacked our democracy."

RT is financed by the Russian government, but the other companies are private concerns.

Cumming accused Flynn of violating the Constitution's Emoluments Clause, which has been construed to prohibit the acceptance of foreign payments by retired U.S. military officers.

He also requested access to portions of a form that Flynn may have filed as part of his security clearance process to become national security adviser, Standard Form 86. The form requires applicants to list foreign contacts.

[Flynn served as Trump's national security advisor](#) for less than a month before questions about his foreign ties sparked his dismissal. He was director of the Defense Intelligence Agency during the Obama administration from 2012 to 2014, before being pushed out and retiring from the Army with the rank of lieutenant general.



Ken Dilanian

Ken Dilanian is the justice and intelligence correspondent for NBC News, based in Washington.

Exhibit 14(a)

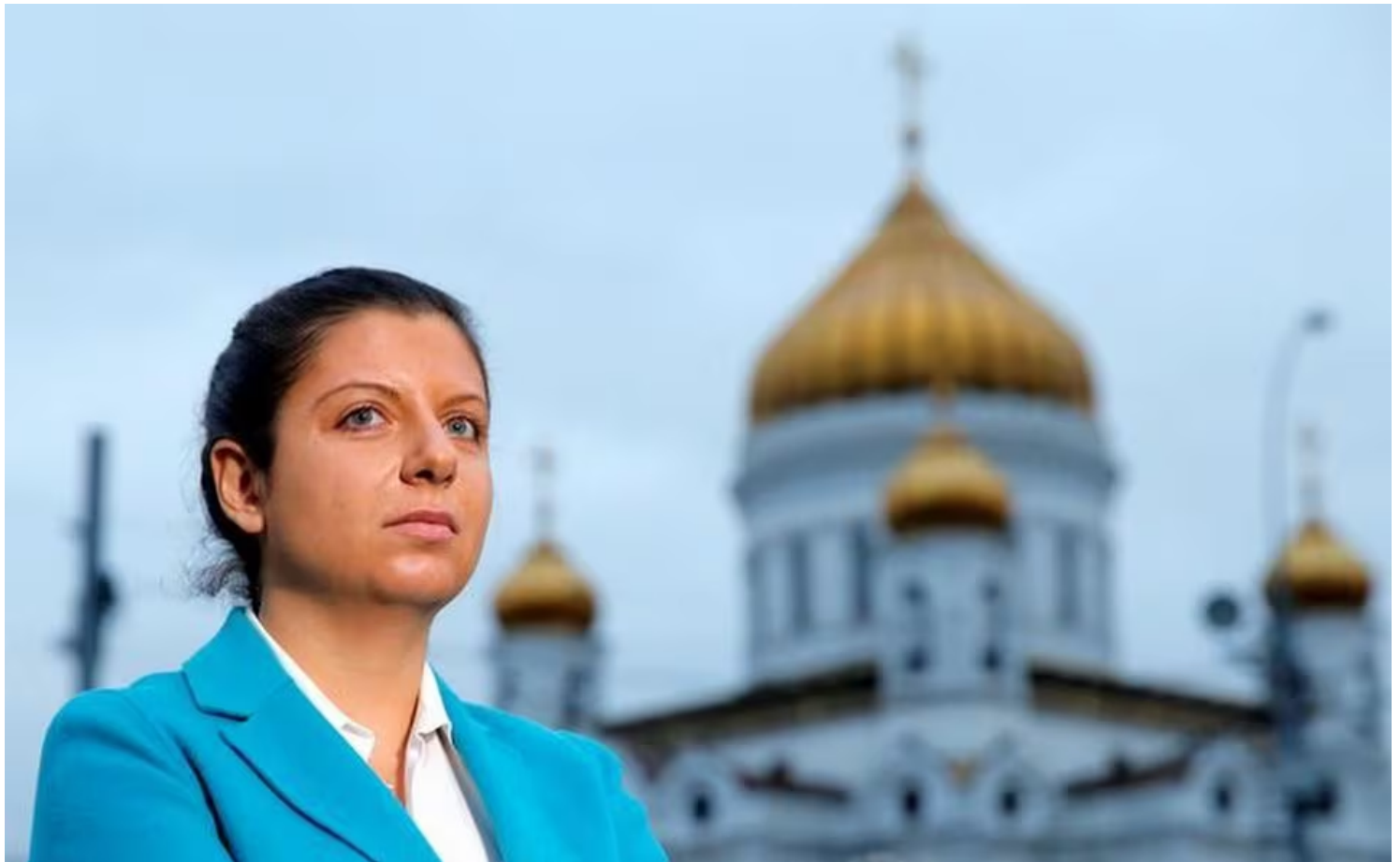
[Learn more about LSEG](#)[My View](#)[Following](#)[Saved](#)

World

Russia's RT America registers as 'foreign agent' in U.S.

By Jack Stubbs and Ginger Gibson

November 13, 2017 4:36 PM EST · Updated 6 years ago



Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of Russian broadcaster RT, meets with journalists, with the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour seen in the background, in Moscow, Russia, October 17, 2016.... [Acquire Licensing Rights](#) [Read more](#)

MOSCOW/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Kremlin-backed television station RT America registered Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice as a "foreign agent" in the United States, the outlet's editor in chief said and the Department of Justice confirmed later in the day.

U.S. intelligence agencies said in a report in January that the television station, which broadcasts on cable in the United States, is "Russia's state-run propaganda machine" and that it contributed to the Kremlin's campaign to interfere with last year's presidential election in favour of Republican Party candidate Donald Trump.

After that report, the Department of Justice insisted that RT America comply with registration requirements under the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA). Under the act, RT will be required to disclose financial information.

Moscow has repeatedly denied the allegations of election meddling and said it views the actions against RT as an unfriendly act.

But RT's editor in chief, Margarita Simonyan, said on Monday that it would comply with the demand in order to avoid further legal action by the U.S. government.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

"Between a criminal case and registration, we chose the latter. We congratulate American freedom of speech and all those who still believe in it," Simonyan said on Twitter.

The Department of Justice confirmed that it received a registration from T&R Productions LLC, which has operated studios for RT, hired and paid U.S.-based employees and produced English-language programming.

"Americans have a right to know who is acting in the United States to influence the U.S. government or public on behalf of foreign principals," said acting Assistant Attorney General Dana Boente.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

In October, Twitter announced it would no longer allow advertisements from RT and another Kremlin-backed news organization, citing intelligence that the television station participated in efforts to influence the election.

FARA requires foreign governments, political parties and the lobbyists and public relations firms they hire in the United States to register with the Department of Justice. FARA was first passed in 1938 in the lead up to World War Two in an effort to combat German propaganda efforts.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

Foreign government-owned news organizations, including China Daily, the English-language newspaper owned by China's government, register under FARA. The law applies to companies that are owned or controlled by foreign governments.

The United States and Russia are engaged in a back-and-forth over "foreign agent" registration.

Russia's parliament warned on Friday that some U.S. and other foreign media could also be declared "foreign agents" in response to the actions against RT, requiring them to regularly declare full details of their funds, financing and staffing.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

U.S. government-sponsored Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), CNN and Germany's Deutsche Welle could all be affected by the retaliatory measures, a senior Russian lawmaker said earlier on Monday.

While travelling in Asia, Trump touted the relationship between himself and Russia and posted on Twitter that improved relations with the country would "a good thing, not a bad thing."

Reporting by Jack Stubbs in Moscow and Ginger Gibson in Washington; Editing by Grant McCool and Lisa Shumaker

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

Acquire Licensing Rights

Read Next

Middle East
More than 100 killed in 'terrorist attacks' near tomb of Iranian Guards' Soleimani
ago

Asia Pacific
How Japan Airlines crew led 367 passengers to safety from a burning plane
9:46 PM UTC

Europe
Russia and Ukraine stage big POW exchange after UAE mediation
10:50 PM UTC

Asia Pacific
Three injured in stabbing incident on Tokyo train, woman in custody
11:28 PM UTC

LSEG Workspace

The next-generation human interface for financial professionals.



More from Reuters

Pictures of December (1:50) - December 31, 2023
[Watch more videos](#)



Pictures of December

01:50

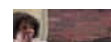
Reuters pictures of the year 2023

01:55

Pictures of November

01:31

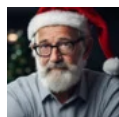
Black women say hair relaxers gave them cancer



Sponsored Content

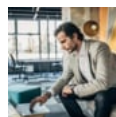
Is a Roth IRA Conversion Really Worth It?

Sponsored by smartasset



Register Now for the Annual Commercial Real Estate Outlook Webinar

Sponsored by JPMorgan Chase



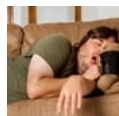
7 Retirement Income Strategies Once Your Portfolio Reaches \$500k

Sponsored by Fisher Investments



Lazy People Keep Spending Too Much Money on These 5 Things

Sponsored by The Penny Hoarder



One Small Change, 53.1% More Retirement Assets (Case Study Proof)

Sponsored by Wholesale Income



Fed Rate Hikes Make it a Good Time to Compare Savings Accounts

Sponsored by NerdWallet



World >

ArcelorMittal JV, others commit \$86 bln in India's Gujarat ahead of investment summit, says state

India · January 3, 2024 · 12:05 PM EST

India's Gujarat state on Wednesday said it has signed initial investment agreements worth \$86 billion with 58 companies including steelmaker ArcelorMittal's joint venture and others operating in sectors such as energy, oil and gas, and chemicals.

Middle East

Killing of Arouri sends menacing message to Hamas chiefs, may hamper truce effort

12:09 PM EST

United States

Takeaways from the 2024 US election: Haley raises \$24.5 mln in Q4

11:12 AM EST

Europe

Polish farmers to resume blockade of Ukraine border crossing

9:47 AM EST

World at Work


Record-breaking doctors' strike piles pressure on England's health service

5:21 AM EST

Sponsored Content


Check Out These Undervalued Stocks Today

Sponsored by The Motley Fool




6 Odd Things Millionaires Do With Money, But Most of Us Haven't Tried

Sponsored by The Penny Hoarder



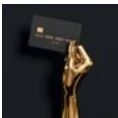
Is Your Savings Account Keeping Up With Recent Rate Hikes?

Sponsored by NerdWallet




Bonus Alert: Unlimited Cash Back Match

Sponsored by The Motley Fool




Is a Roth IRA Conversion Really Worth It?

Sponsored by smartasset



50-Year Wall Street Legend: "You Have Just Weeks To Move Your Money"

Sponsored by Chaikin Analytics



Sponsored Content

The 5 Dumbest Things We Keep Spending Too Much Money On

Sponsored by The Penny Hoarder

Lazy People Keep Spending Too Much Money on These 5 Things

Sponsored by The Penny Hoarder

9 Ways To Get Money Without Getting A Job

Sponsored by FinanceBuzz


One Small Change, 53.1% More Retirement Assets (Case Study Proof)


Sponsored by Wholesale Income


Register Now for the Annual Commercial Real Estate Outlook Webinar

7 Ways to Retire Comfortably With \$500k

Sponsored by Fisher Investments

- Latest
- Home
- Authors
- Topic sitemap
- Media
-  Videos

 Pictures

 Graphics

- Browse
- World
- Business
- Markets
- Sustainability
- Legal
- Breakingviews
- Technology
- Investigations
- Sports
- Science
- Lifestyle

- About Reuters
- About Reuters
- Careers
- Reuters News Agency
- Brand Attribution Guidelines
- Reuters Leadership
- Reuters Fact Check
- Reuters Diversity Report
- Stay Informed
- Download the App (iOS)
- Download the App (Android)
- Newsletters

Information you can trust

Reuters, the news and media division of Thomson Reuters, is the world's largest multimedia news provider, reaching billions of people worldwide every day. Reuters provides business, financial, national and international news to professionals via desktop terminals, the world's media organizations, industry events and directly to consumers.

Follow Us



Thomson Reuters Products

Westlaw

Build the strongest argument relying on authoritative content, attorney-editor expertise, and industry defining technology.

Onesource

The most comprehensive solution to manage all your complex and ever-expanding tax and compliance needs.

Checkpoint

The industry leader for online information for tax, accounting and finance professionals.

LSEG Products

Workspace

Access unmatched financial data, news and content in a highly-customised workflow experience on desktop, web and mobile.

Data Catalogue

Browse an unrivalled portfolio of real-time and historical market data and insights from worldwide sources and experts.

World-Check

Screen for heightened risk individual and entities globally to help uncover hidden risks in business relationships and human networks.

Advertise With Us Advertising Guidelines Coupons Acquire Licensing Rights

All quotes delayed a minimum of 15 minutes. See here for a complete list of exchanges and delays.

Cookies Terms of Use Privacy Digital Accessibility Corrections Site Feedback

© 2023 Reuters. All rights reserved

Exhibit 14(b)



**Background to “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions
in Recent US Elections”: The Analytic Process and Cyber
Incident Attribution**

6 January 2017

Background to “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections”: The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution

“Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections” is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment that has been provided to the President and to recipients approved by the President.

- The Intelligence Community rarely can publicly reveal the full extent of its knowledge or the precise bases for its assessments, as the release of such information would reveal sensitive sources or methods and imperil the ability to collect critical foreign intelligence in the future.
- Thus, while the conclusions in the report are all reflected in the classified assessment, the declassified report does not and cannot include the full supporting information, including specific intelligence and sources and methods.

The Analytic Process

The mission of the Intelligence Community is to seek to reduce the uncertainty surrounding foreign activities, capabilities, or leaders’ intentions. This objective is difficult to achieve when seeking to understand complex issues on which foreign actors go to extraordinary lengths to hide or obfuscate their activities.

- On these issues of great importance to US national security, the goal of intelligence analysis is to provide assessments to decisionmakers that are intellectually rigorous, objective, timely, and useful, and that adhere to tradecraft standards.
- The tradecraft standards for analytic products have been refined over the past ten years. These standards include describing sources (including their reliability and access to the information they provide), clearly expressing uncertainty, distinguishing between underlying information and analysts’ judgments and assumptions, exploring alternatives, demonstrating relevance to the customer, using strong and transparent logic, and explaining change or consistency in judgments over time.
- Applying these standards helps ensure that the Intelligence Community provides US policymakers, warfighters, and operators with the best and most accurate insight, warning, and context, as well as potential opportunities to advance US national security.

Intelligence Community analysts integrate information from a wide range of sources, including human sources, technical collection, and open source information, and apply specialized skills and structured analytic tools to draw inferences informed by the data available, relevant past activity, and logic and reasoning to provide insight into what is happening and the prospects for the future.

- A critical part of the analyst’s task is to explain uncertainties associated with major judgments based on the quantity and quality of the source material, information gaps, and the complexity of the issue.
- When Intelligence Community analysts use words such as “we assess” or “we judge,” they are conveying an analytic assessment or judgment.
- Some analytic judgments are based directly on collected information; others rest on previous judgments, which serve as building blocks in rigorous analysis. In either type of judgment, the tradecraft standards outlined above ensure that analysts have an appropriate basis for the judgment.

- Intelligence Community judgments often include two important elements: judgments of how likely it is that something has happened or will happen (using terms such as “likely” or “unlikely”) and confidence levels in those judgments (low, moderate, and high) that refer to the evidentiary basis, logic and reasoning, and precedents that underpin the judgments.

Determining Attribution in Cyber Incidents

The nature of cyberspace makes attribution of cyber operations difficult but not impossible. Every kind of cyber operation—malicious or not—leaves a trail. US Intelligence Community analysts use this information, their constantly growing knowledge base of previous events and known malicious actors, and their knowledge of how these malicious actors work and the tools that they use, to attempt to trace these operations back to their source. In every case, they apply the same tradecraft standards described in the Analytic Process above.

- Analysts consider a series of questions to assess how the information compares with existing knowledge and adjust their confidence in their judgments as appropriate to account for any alternative hypotheses and ambiguities.
- An assessment of attribution usually is not a simple statement of who conducted an operation, but rather a series of judgments that describe whether it was an isolated incident, who was the likely perpetrator, that perpetrator’s possible motivations, and whether a foreign government had a role in ordering or leading the operation.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.



ICA

INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections



This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

This page intentionally left blank.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

Scope and Sourcing

Information available as of 29 December 2016 was used in the preparation of this product.

Scope

This report includes an analytic assessment drafted and coordinated among The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and The National Security Agency (NSA), which draws on intelligence information collected and disseminated by those three agencies. It covers the motivation and scope of Moscow's intentions regarding US elections and Moscow's use of cyber tools and media campaigns to influence US public opinion. The assessment focuses on activities aimed at the 2016 US presidential election and draws on our understanding of previous Russian influence operations. When we use the term "we" it refers to an assessment by all three agencies.

- This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment. This document's conclusions are identical to the highly classified assessment, but this document does not include the full supporting information, including specific intelligence on key elements of the influence campaign. Given the redactions, we made minor edits purely for readability and flow.

We did not make an assessment of the impact that Russian activities had on the outcome of the 2016 election. The US Intelligence Community is charged with monitoring and assessing the intentions, capabilities, and actions of foreign actors; it does not analyze US political processes or US public opinion.

- New information continues to emerge, providing increased insight into Russian activities.

Sourcing

Many of the key judgments in this assessment rely on a body of reporting from multiple sources that are consistent with our understanding of Russian behavior. Insights into Russian efforts—including specific cyber operations—and Russian views of key US players derive from multiple corroborating sources.

Some of our judgments about Kremlin preferences and intent are drawn from the behavior of Kremlin-loyal political figures, state media, and pro-Kremlin social media actors, all of whom the Kremlin either directly uses to convey messages or who are answerable to the Kremlin. The Russian leadership invests significant resources in both foreign and domestic propaganda and places a premium on transmitting what it views as consistent, self-reinforcing narratives regarding its desires and redlines, whether on Ukraine, Syria, or relations with the United States.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections

ICA 2017-01D
6 January 2017

Key Judgments

Russian efforts to influence the 2016 US presidential election represent the most recent expression of Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine the US-led liberal democratic order, but these activities demonstrated a significant escalation in directness, level of activity, and scope of effort compared to previous operations.

We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump. We have high confidence in these judgments.

- **We also assess Putin and the Russian Government aspired to help President-elect Trump's election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him.** All three agencies agree with this judgment. CIA and FBI have high confidence in this judgment; NSA has moderate confidence.
- Moscow's approach evolved over the course of the campaign based on Russia's understanding of the electoral prospects of the two main candidates. When it appeared to Moscow that Secretary Clinton was likely to win the election, the Russian influence campaign began to focus more on undermining her future presidency.
- Further information has come to light since Election Day that, when combined with Russian behavior since early November 2016, increases our confidence in our assessments of Russian motivations and goals.

Moscow's influence campaign followed a Russian messaging strategy that blends covert intelligence operations—such as cyber activity—with overt efforts by Russian Government agencies, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users or “trolls.” Russia, like its Soviet predecessor, has a history of conducting covert influence campaigns focused on US presidential elections that have used intelligence officers and agents and press placements to disparage candidates perceived as hostile to the Kremlin.

- Russia's intelligence services conducted cyber operations against targets associated with the 2016 US presidential election, including targets associated with both major US political parties.
- We assess with high confidence that Russian military intelligence (General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate or GRU) used the Guccifer 2.0 persona and DCLeaks.com to release US victim data

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

obtained in cyber operations publicly and in exclusives to media outlets and relayed material to WikiLeaks.

- Russian intelligence obtained and maintained access to elements of multiple US state or local electoral boards. **DHS assesses that the types of systems Russian actors targeted or compromised were not involved in vote tallying.**
- Russia's state-run propaganda machine contributed to the influence campaign by serving as a platform for Kremlin messaging to Russian and international audiences.

We assess Moscow will apply lessons learned from its Putin-ordered campaign aimed at the US presidential election to future influence efforts worldwide, including against US allies and their election processes.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

Contents

Scope and Sourcing	i
Key Judgments	ii
Contents	iv

CIA/FBI/NSA Assessment: Russia's Influence Campaign Targeting the 2016 US Presidential Election

Putin Ordered Campaign To Influence US Election	1
Russian Campaign Was Multifaceted	2
Influence Effort Was Boldest Yet in the US	5
Election Operation Signals "New Normal" in Russian Influence Efforts	5

Annexes

A: Russia—Kremlin's TV Seeks To Influence Politics, Fuel Discontent in US	6
B: Estimative Language	13

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

Russia's Influence Campaign Targeting the 2016 US Presidential Election



Russia's Influence Campaign Targeting the 2016 US Presidential Election

Putin Ordered Campaign To Influence US Election

We assess with high confidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election, the consistent goals of which were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump. When it appeared to Moscow that Secretary Clinton was likely to win the election, the Russian influence campaign then focused on undermining her expected presidency.

- We also assess Putin and the Russian Government aspired to help President-elect Trump's election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him. All three agencies agree with this judgment. CIA and FBI have high confidence in this judgment; NSA has moderate confidence.
- In trying to influence the US election, we assess the Kremlin sought to advance its longstanding desire to undermine the US-led liberal democratic order, the promotion of which Putin and other senior Russian leaders view as a threat to Russia and Putin's regime.
- Putin publicly pointed to the Panama Papers disclosure and the Olympic doping scandal as US-directed efforts to defame Russia, suggesting he sought to use disclosures to discredit the image of the United States and cast it as hypocritical.

- Putin most likely wanted to discredit Secretary Clinton because he has publicly blamed her since 2011 for inciting mass protests against his regime in late 2011 and early 2012, and because he holds a grudge for comments he almost certainly saw as disparaging him.

We assess Putin, his advisers, and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump over Secretary Clinton.

- Beginning in June, Putin's public comments about the US presidential race avoided directly praising President-elect Trump, probably because Kremlin officials thought that any praise from Putin personally would backfire in the United States. Nonetheless, Putin publicly indicated a preference for President-elect Trump's stated policy to work with Russia, and pro-Kremlin figures spoke highly about what they saw as his Russia-friendly positions on Syria and Ukraine. Putin publicly contrasted the President-elect's approach to Russia with Secretary Clinton's "aggressive rhetoric."
- Moscow also saw the election of President-elect Trump as a way to achieve an international counterterrorism coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).
- Putin has had many positive experiences working with Western political leaders whose business interests made them more disposed to deal with Russia, such as former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.
- Putin, Russian officials, and other pro-Kremlin pundits stopped publicly criticizing the US election process as unfair almost immediately

after the election because Moscow probably assessed it would be counterproductive to building positive relations.

We assess the influence campaign aspired to help President-elect Trump's chances of victory when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to the President-elect. When it appeared to Moscow that Secretary Clinton was likely to win the presidency the Russian influence campaign focused more on undercutting Secretary Clinton's legitimacy and crippling her presidency from its start, including by impugning the fairness of the election.

- Before the election, Russian diplomats had publicly denounced the US electoral process and were prepared to publicly call into question the validity of the results. Pro-Kremlin bloggers had prepared a Twitter campaign, #DemocracyRIP, on election night in anticipation of Secretary Clinton's victory, judging from their social media activity.

Russian Campaign Was Multifaceted

Moscow's use of disclosures during the US election was unprecedented, but its influence campaign otherwise followed a longstanding Russian messaging strategy that blends covert intelligence operations—such as cyber activity—with overt efforts by Russian Government agencies, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users or “trolls.”

- We assess that influence campaigns are approved at the highest levels of the Russian Government—particularly those that would be politically sensitive.
- Moscow's campaign aimed at the US election reflected years of investment in its capabilities, which Moscow has honed in the former Soviet states.

- By their nature, Russian influence campaigns are multifaceted and designed to be deniable because they use a mix of agents of influence, cutouts, front organizations, and false-flag operations. Moscow demonstrated this during the Ukraine crisis in 2014, when Russia deployed forces and advisers to eastern Ukraine and denied it publicly.

The Kremlin's campaign aimed at the US election featured disclosures of data obtained through Russian cyber operations; intrusions into US state and local electoral boards; and overt propaganda. Russian intelligence collection both informed and enabled the influence campaign.

Cyber Espionage Against US Political Organizations.

Russia's intelligence services conducted cyber operations against targets associated with the 2016 US presidential election, including targets associated with both major US political parties.

We assess Russian intelligence services collected against the US primary campaigns, think tanks, and lobbying groups they viewed as likely to shape future US policies. In July 2015, Russian intelligence gained access to Democratic National Committee (DNC) networks and maintained that access until at least June 2016.

- The General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) probably began cyber operations aimed at the US election by March 2016. We assess that the GRU operations resulted in the compromise of the personal e-mail accounts of Democratic Party officials and political figures. By May, the GRU had exfiltrated large volumes of data from the DNC.

Public Disclosures of Russian-Collected Data.

We assess with high confidence that the GRU used the Guccifer 2.0 persona, DCLeaks.com, and WikiLeaks to release US victim data obtained in

cyber operations publicly and in exclusives to media outlets.

- Guccifer 2.0, who claimed to be an independent Romanian hacker, made multiple contradictory statements and false claims about his likely Russian identity throughout the election. Press reporting suggests more than one person claiming to be Guccifer 2.0 interacted with journalists.
- Content that we assess was taken from e-mail accounts targeted by the GRU in March 2016 appeared on DCLeaks.com starting in June.

We assess with high confidence that the GRU relayed material it acquired from the DNC and senior Democratic officials to WikiLeaks. Moscow most likely chose WikiLeaks because of its self-proclaimed reputation for authenticity. Disclosures through WikiLeaks did not contain any evident forgeries.

- In early September, Putin said publicly it was important the DNC data was exposed to WikiLeaks, calling the search for the source of the leaks a distraction and denying Russian "state-level" involvement.
- The Kremlin's principal international propaganda outlet RT (formerly Russia Today) has actively collaborated with WikiLeaks. RT's editor-in-chief visited WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in August 2013, where they discussed renewing his broadcast contract with RT, according to Russian and Western media. Russian media subsequently announced that RT had become "the only Russian media company" to partner with WikiLeaks and had received access to "new leaks of secret information." RT routinely gives Assange sympathetic coverage and provides him a platform to denounce the United States.

These election-related disclosures reflect a pattern of Russian intelligence using hacked information in targeted influence efforts against targets such as Olympic athletes and other foreign governments. Such efforts have included releasing or altering personal data, defacing websites, or releasing e-mails.

- A prominent target since the 2016 Summer Olympics has been the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), with leaks that we assess to have originated with the GRU and that have involved data on US athletes.

Russia collected on some Republican-affiliated targets but did not conduct a comparable disclosure campaign.

Russian Cyber Intrusions Into State and Local Electoral Boards. Russian intelligence accessed elements of multiple state or local electoral boards. Since early 2014, Russian intelligence has researched US electoral processes and related technology and equipment.

- DHS assesses that the types of systems we observed Russian actors targeting or compromising are not involved in vote tallying.

Russian Propaganda Efforts. Russia's state-run propaganda machine—comprised of its domestic media apparatus, outlets targeting global audiences such as RT and Sputnik, and a network of quasi-government trolls—contributed to the influence campaign by serving as a platform for Kremlin messaging to Russian and international audiences. State-owned Russian media made increasingly favorable comments about President-elect Trump as the 2016 US general and primary election campaigns progressed while consistently offering negative coverage of Secretary Clinton.

- Starting in March 2016, Russian Government-linked actors began openly supporting President-elect Trump's candidacy in media

aimed at English-speaking audiences. RT and Sputnik—another government-funded outlet producing pro-Kremlin radio and online content in a variety of languages for international audiences—consistently cast President-elect Trump as the target of unfair coverage from traditional US media outlets that they claimed were subservient to a corrupt political establishment.

- Russian media hailed President-elect Trump's victory as a vindication of Putin's advocacy of global populist movements—the theme of Putin's annual conference for Western academics in October 2016—and the latest example of Western liberalism's collapse.
- Putin's chief propagandist Dmitriy Kiselev used his flagship weekly newsmagazine program this fall to cast President-elect Trump as an outsider victimized by a corrupt political establishment and faulty democratic election process that aimed to prevent his election because of his desire to work with Moscow.
- Pro-Kremlin proxy Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, proclaimed just before the election that if President-elect Trump won, Russia would "drink champagne" in anticipation of being able to advance its positions on Syria and Ukraine.

RT's coverage of Secretary Clinton throughout the US presidential campaign was consistently negative and focused on her leaked e-mails and accused her of corruption, poor physical and mental health, and ties to Islamic extremism. Some Russian officials echoed Russian lines for the influence campaign that Secretary Clinton's election could lead to a war between the United States and Russia.

- In August, Kremlin-linked political analysts suggested avenging negative Western reports

on Putin by airing segments devoted to Secretary Clinton's alleged health problems.

- On 6 August, RT published an English-language video called "Julian Assange Special: Do WikiLeaks Have the E-mail That'll Put Clinton in Prison?" and an exclusive interview with Assange entitled "Clinton and ISIS Funded by the Same Money." RT's most popular video on Secretary Clinton, "How 100% of the Clintons' 'Charity' Went to...Themselves," had more than 9 million views on social media platforms. RT's most popular English language video about the President-elect, called "Trump Will Not Be Permitted To Win," featured Assange and had 2.2 million views.
- For more on Russia's past media efforts—including portraying the 2012 US electoral process as undemocratic—please see Annex A: Russia—Kremlin's TV Seeks To Influence Politics, Fuel Discontent in US.

Russia used trolls as well as RT as part of its influence efforts to denigrate Secretary Clinton. This effort amplified stories on scandals about Secretary Clinton and the role of WikiLeaks in the election campaign.

- The likely financier of the so-called Internet Research Agency of professional trolls located in Saint Petersburg is a close Putin ally with ties to Russian intelligence.
- A journalist who is a leading expert on the Internet Research Agency claimed that some social media accounts that appear to be tied to Russia's professional trolls—because they previously were devoted to supporting Russian actions in Ukraine—started to advocate for President-elect Trump as early as December 2015.

Influence Effort Was Boldest Yet in the US

Russia's effort to influence the 2016 US presidential election represented a significant escalation in directness, level of activity, and scope of effort compared to previous operations aimed at US elections. We assess the 2016 influence campaign reflected the Kremlin's recognition of the worldwide effects that mass disclosures of US Government and other private data—such as those conducted by WikiLeaks and others—have achieved in recent years, and their understanding of the value of orchestrating such disclosures to maximize the impact of compromising information.

- During the Cold War, the Soviet Union used intelligence officers, influence agents, forgeries, and press placements to disparage candidates perceived as hostile to the Kremlin, according to a former KGB archivist.

Since the Cold War, Russian intelligence efforts related to US elections have primarily focused on foreign intelligence collection. For decades, Russian and Soviet intelligence services have sought to collect insider information from US political parties that could help Russian leaders understand a new US administration's plans and priorities.

- The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) Directorate S (Illegals) officers arrested in the United States in 2010 reported to Moscow about the 2008 election.
- In the 1970s, the KGB recruited a Democratic Party activist who reported information about then-presidential hopeful Jimmy Carter's campaign and foreign policy plans, according to a former KGB archivist.

Election Operation Signals “New Normal” in Russian Influence Efforts

We assess Moscow will apply lessons learned from its campaign aimed at the US presidential election to future influence efforts in the United States and worldwide, including against US allies and their election processes. We assess the Russian intelligence services would have seen their election influence campaign as at least a qualified success because of their perceived ability to impact public discussion.

- Putin's public views of the disclosures suggest the Kremlin and the intelligence services will continue to consider using cyber-enabled disclosure operations because of their belief that these can accomplish Russian goals relatively easily without significant damage to Russian interests.
- Russia has sought to influence elections across Europe.

We assess Russian intelligence services will continue to develop capabilities to provide Putin with options to use against the United States, judging from past practice and current efforts. Immediately after Election Day, we assess Russian intelligence began a spearphishing campaign targeting US Government employees and individuals associated with US think tanks and NGOs in national security, defense, and foreign policy fields. This campaign could provide material for future influence efforts as well as foreign intelligence collection on the incoming administration's goals and plans.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

Annex A

Russia -- Kremlin's TV Seeks To Influence Politics, Fuel Discontent in US*

RT America TV, a Kremlin-financed channel operated from within the United States, has substantially expanded its repertoire of programming that highlights criticism of alleged US shortcomings in democracy and civil liberties. The rapid expansion of RT's operations and budget and recent candid statements by RT's leadership point to the channel's importance to the Kremlin as a messaging tool and indicate a Kremlin-directed campaign to undermine faith in the US Government and fuel political protest. The Kremlin has committed significant resources to expanding the channel's reach, particularly its social media footprint. A reliable UK report states that RT recently was the most-watched foreign news channel in the UK. RT America has positioned itself as a domestic US channel and has deliberately sought to obscure any legal ties to the Russian Government.

In the runup to the 2012 US presidential election in November, English-language channel RT America -- created and financed by the Russian Government and part of Russian Government-sponsored RT TV (see textbox 1) -- intensified its usually critical coverage of the United States. The channel portrayed the US electoral process as undemocratic and featured calls by US protesters for the public to rise up and "take this government back."

- RT introduced two new shows -- "Breaking the Set" on 4 September and "Truthseeker" on 2 November -- both overwhelmingly focused on criticism of US and Western governments as well as the promotion of radical discontent.
- From August to November 2012, RT ran numerous reports on alleged US election fraud and voting machine vulnerabilities, contending that US election results cannot be trusted and do not reflect the popular will.
- In an effort to highlight the alleged "lack of democracy" in the United States, RT broadcast, hosted, and advertised third-party candidate debates and ran reporting supportive of the political agenda of these candidates. The RT hosts asserted that the US two-party system does not represent the views of at least one-third of the population and is a "sham."



Messaging on RT prior to the US presidential election (RT, 3 November)

* This annex was originally published on 11 December 2012 by the Open Source Center, now the Open Source Enterprise.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

- RT aired a documentary about the Occupy Wall Street movement on 1, 2, and 4 November. RT framed the movement as a fight against "the ruling class" and described the current US political system as corrupt and dominated by corporations. RT advertising for the documentary featured Occupy movement calls to "take back" the government. The documentary claimed that the US system cannot be changed democratically, but only through "revolution." After the 6 November US presidential election, RT aired a documentary called "Cultures of Protest," about active and often violent political resistance (RT, 1-10 November).



RT new show "Truthseeker" (RT, 11 November)

RT Conducts Strategic Messaging for Russian Government

RT's criticism of the US election was the latest facet of its broader and longer-standing anti-US messaging likely aimed at undermining viewers' trust in US democratic procedures and undercutting US criticism of Russia's political system. RT Editor in Chief Margarita Simonyan recently declared that the United States itself lacks democracy and that it has "no moral right to teach the rest of the world" (*Kommersant*, 6 November).

- Simonyan has characterized RT's coverage of the Occupy Wall Street movement as "information warfare" that is aimed at promoting popular dissatisfaction with the US Government. RT created a *Facebook* app to connect Occupy Wall Street protesters via social media. In addition, RT featured its own hosts in Occupy rallies ("Minaev Live," 10 April; RT, 2, 12 June).
- RT's reports often characterize the United States as a "surveillance state" and allege widespread infringements of civil liberties, police brutality, and drone use (RT, 24, 28 October, 1-10 November).
- RT has also focused on criticism of the US economic system, US currency policy, alleged Wall Street greed, and the US national debt. Some of RT's hosts have compared the United States to Imperial Rome and have predicted that government corruption and "corporate greed" will lead to US financial collapse (RT, 31 October, 4 November).



Simonyan steps over the White House in the introduction from her short-lived domestic show on REN TV (REN TV, 26 December 2011)

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

RT broadcasts support for other Russian interests in areas such as foreign and energy policy.

- RT runs anti-fracking programming, highlighting environmental issues and the impacts on public health. This is likely reflective of the Russian Government's concern about the impact of fracking and US natural gas production on the global energy market and the potential challenges to Gazprom's profitability (5 October).
- RT is a leading media voice opposing Western intervention in the Syrian conflict and blaming the West for waging "information wars" against the Syrian Government (RT, 10 October-9 November).



RT anti-fracking reporting (RT, 5 October)

- In an earlier example of RT's messaging in support of the Russian Government, during the Georgia-Russia military conflict the channel accused Georgians of killing civilians and organizing a genocide of the Ossetian people. According to Simonyan, when "the Ministry of Defense was at war with Georgia," RT was "waging an information war against the entire Western world" (*Kommersant*, 11 July).

In recent interviews, RT's leadership has candidly acknowledged its mission to expand its US audience and to expose it to Kremlin messaging. However, the leadership rejected claims that RT interferes in US domestic affairs.

- Simonyan claimed in popular arts magazine *Afisha* on 3 October: "It is important to have a channel that people get used to, and then, when needed, you show them what you need to show. In some sense, not having our own foreign broadcasting is the same as not having a ministry of defense. When there is no war, it looks like we don't need it. However, when there is a war, it is critical."
- According to Simonyan, "the word 'propaganda' has a very negative connotation, but indeed, there is not a single international foreign TV channel that is doing something other than promotion of the values of the country that it is broadcasting from." She added that "when Russia is at war, we are, of course, on Russia's side" (*Afisha*, 3 October; *Kommersant*, 4 July).
- TV-Novosti director Nikolov said on 4 October to the Association of Cable Television that RT builds on worldwide demand for "an alternative view of the entire world." Simonyan asserted on 3 October in *Afisha* that RT's goal is "to make an alternative channel that shares information unavailable elsewhere" in order to "conquer the audience" and expose it to Russian state messaging (*Afisha*, 3 October; *Kommersant*, 4 July).
- On 26 May, Simonyan tweeted with irony: "Ambassador McFaul hints that our channel is interference with US domestic affairs. And we, sinful souls, were thinking that it is freedom of speech."

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

RT Leadership Closely Tied to, Controlled by Kremlin

RT Editor in Chief Margarita Simonyan has close ties to top Russian Government officials, especially Presidential Administration Deputy Chief of Staff Aleksey Gromov, who reportedly manages political TV coverage in Russia and is one of the founders of RT.

- Simonyan has claimed that Gromov shielded her from other officials and their requests to air certain reports. Russian media consider Simonyan to be Gromov's protege (*Kommersant*, 4 July; *Dozhd TV*, 11 July).
- Simonyan replaced Gromov on state-owned Channel One's Board of Directors. Government officials, including Gromov and Putin's Press Secretary Peskov were involved in creating RT and appointing Simonyan (*Afisha*, 3 October).
- According to Simonyan, Gromov oversees political coverage on TV, and he has periodic meetings with media managers where he shares classified information and discusses their coverage plans. Some opposition journalists, including Andrey Loshak, claim that he also ordered media attacks on opposition figures (*Kommersant*, 11 July).



Simonyan shows RT facilities to then Prime Minister Putin. Simonyan was on Putin's 2012 presidential election campaign staff in Moscow (Rospress, 22 September 2010, Ria Novosti, 25 October 2012).

The Kremlin staffs RT and closely supervises RT's coverage, recruiting people who can convey Russian strategic messaging because of their ideological beliefs.

- The head of RT's Arabic-language service, Aydar Aganin, was rotated from the diplomatic service to manage RT's Arabic-language expansion, suggesting a close relationship between RT and Russia's foreign policy apparatus. RT's London Bureau is managed by Darya Pushkova, the daughter of Aleksey Pushkov, the current chair of the Duma Russian Foreign Affairs Committee and a former Gorbachev speechwriter (*DXB*, 26 March 2009; *MK.ru*, 13 March 2006).
- According to Simonyan, the Russian Government sets rating and viewership requirements for RT and, "since RT receives budget from the state, it must complete tasks given by the state." According to Nikolov, RT news stories are written and edited "to become news" exclusively in RT's Moscow office (*Dozhd TV*, 11 July; *AKT*, 4 October).
- In her interview with pro-Kremlin journalist Sergey Minaev, Simonyan complimented RT staff in the United States for passionately defending Russian positions on the air and in social media. Simonyan said: "I wish you could see...how these guys, not just on air, but on their own social networks, *Twitter*, and when giving interviews, how they defend the positions that we stand on!" ("Minaev Live," 10 April).

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

RT Focuses on Social Media, Building Audience

RT aggressively advertises its social media accounts and has a significant and fast-growing social media footprint. In line with its efforts to present itself as anti-mainstream and to provide viewers alternative news content, RT is making its social media operations a top priority, both to avoid broadcast TV regulations and to expand its overall audience.

- According to RT management, RT's website receives at least 500,000 unique viewers every day. Since its inception in 2005, RT videos received more than 800 million views on *YouTube* (1 million views per day), which is the highest among news outlets (see graphics for comparison with other news channels) (*AKT*, 4 October).
- According to Simonyan, the TV audience worldwide is losing trust in traditional TV broadcasts and stations, while the popularity of "alternative channels" like RT or Al Jazeera grows. RT markets itself as an "alternative channel" that is available via the Internet everywhere in the world, and it encourages interaction and social networking (*Kommersant*, 29 September).
- According to Simonyan, RT uses social media to expand the reach of its political reporting and uses well-trained people to monitor public opinion in social media commentaries (*Kommersant*, 29 September).
- According to Nikolov, RT requires its hosts to have social media accounts, in part because social media allows the distribution of content that would not be allowed on television (*Newreporter.org*, 11 October).
- Simonyan claimed in her 3 October interview to independent TV channel Dozhd that Occupy Wall Street coverage gave RT a significant audience boost.

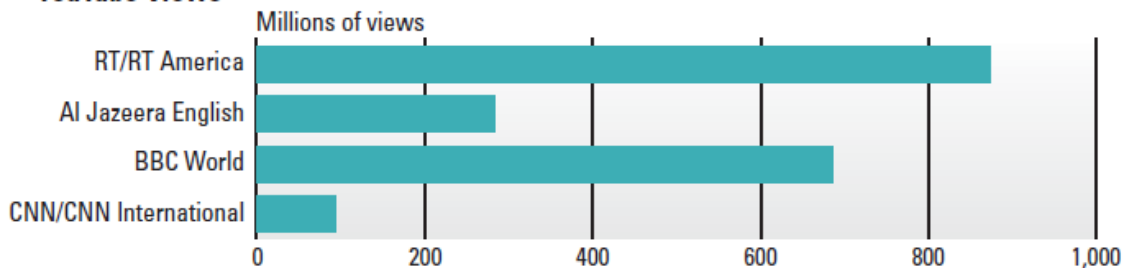
The Kremlin spends \$190 million a year on the distribution and dissemination of RT programming, focusing on hotels and satellite, terrestrial, and cable broadcasting. The Kremlin is rapidly expanding RT's availability around the world and giving it a reach comparable to channels such as Al Jazeera English. According to Simonyan, the United Kingdom and the United States are RT's most successful markets. RT does not, however, publish audience information.

- According to market research company Nielsen, RT had the most rapid growth (40 percent) among all international news channels in the United States over the past year (2012). Its audience in New York tripled and in Washington DC grew by 60% (*Kommersant*, 4 July).
- RT claims that it is surpassing Al Jazeera in viewership in New York and Washington DC (*BARB*, 20 November; RT, 21 November).
- RT states on its website that it can reach more than 550 million people worldwide and 85 million people in the United States; however, it does not publicize its actual US audience numbers (RT, 10 December).

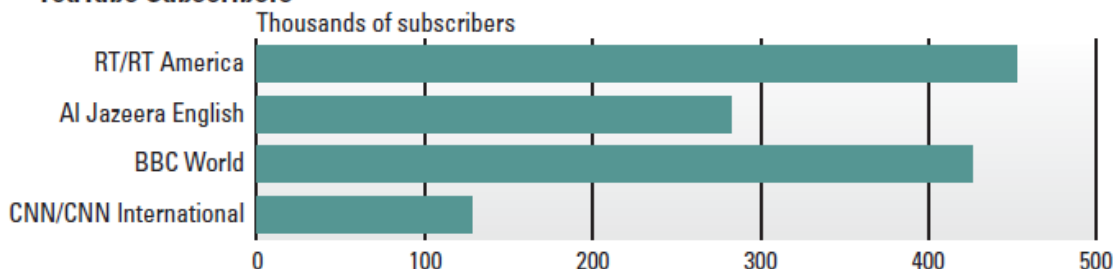
This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

TV News Broadcasters: Comparative Social Media Footprint

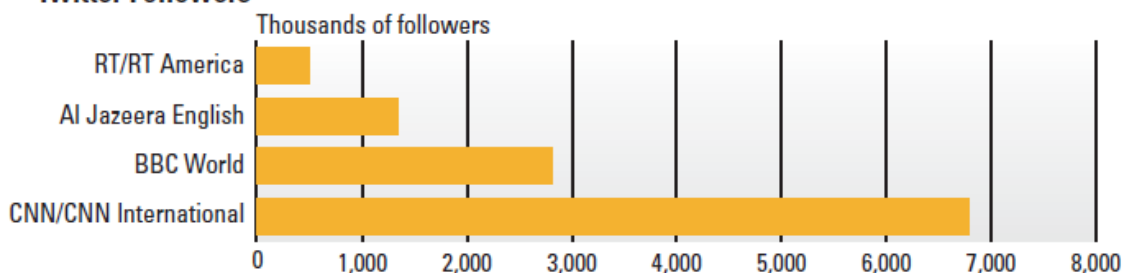
YouTube Views



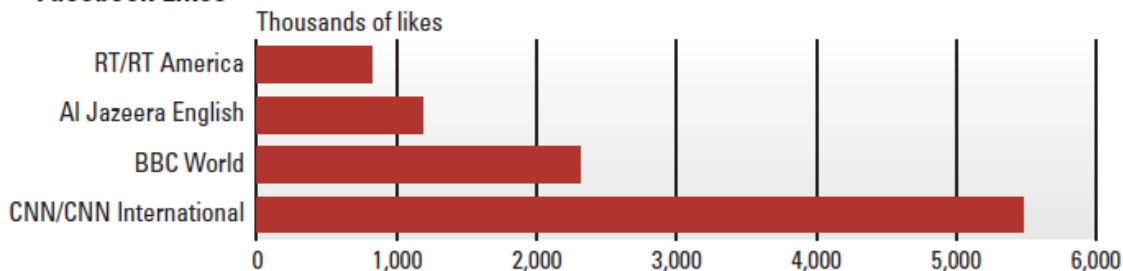
YouTube Subscribers



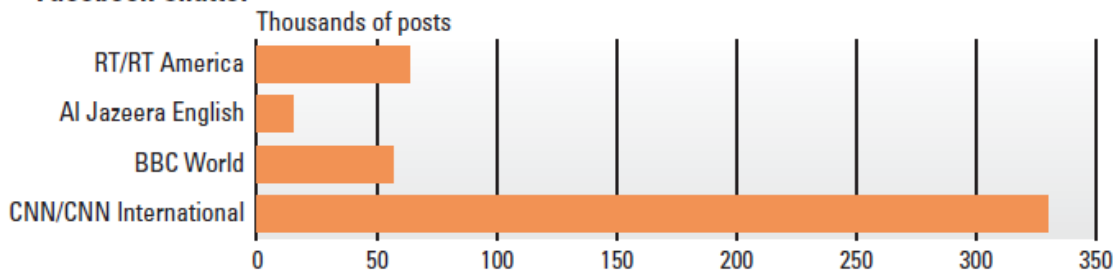
Twitter Followers



Facebook Likes



Facebook Chatter



170105101144_1-17

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

Formal Disassociation From Kremlin Facilitates RT US Messaging

RT America formally disassociates itself from the Russian Government by using a Moscow-based autonomous nonprofit organization to finance its US operations. According to RT's leadership, this structure was set up to avoid the Foreign Agents Registration Act and to facilitate licensing abroad. In addition, RT rebranded itself in 2008 to deemphasize its Russian origin.

- According to Simonyan, RT America differs from other Russian state institutions in terms of ownership, but not in terms of financing. To disassociate RT from the Russian Government, the federal news agency RIA Novosti established a subsidiary autonomous nonprofit organization, TV-Novosti, using the formal independence of this company to establish and finance RT worldwide (Dozhd TV, 11 July).
- Nikolov claimed that RT is an "autonomous noncommercial entity," which is "well received by foreign regulators" and "simplifies getting a license." Simonyan said that RT America is not a "foreign agent" according to US law because it uses a US commercial organization for its broadcasts (AKT, 4 October; Dozhd TV, 11 July).
- Simonyan observed that RT's original Russia-centric news reporting did not generate sufficient audience, so RT switched to covering international and US domestic affairs and removed the words "Russia Today" from the logo "to stop scaring away the audience" (*Afisha*, 18 October; *Kommersant*, 4 July).
- RT hires or makes contractual agreements with Westerners with views that fit its agenda and airs them on RT. Simonyan said on the pro-Kremlin show "Minaev Live" on 10 April that RT has enough audience and money to be able to choose its hosts, and it chooses the hosts that "think like us," "are interested in working in the anti-mainstream," and defend RT's beliefs on social media. Some hosts and journalists do not present themselves as associated with RT when interviewing people, and many of them have affiliations to other media and activist organizations in the United States ("Minaev Live," 10 April).

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

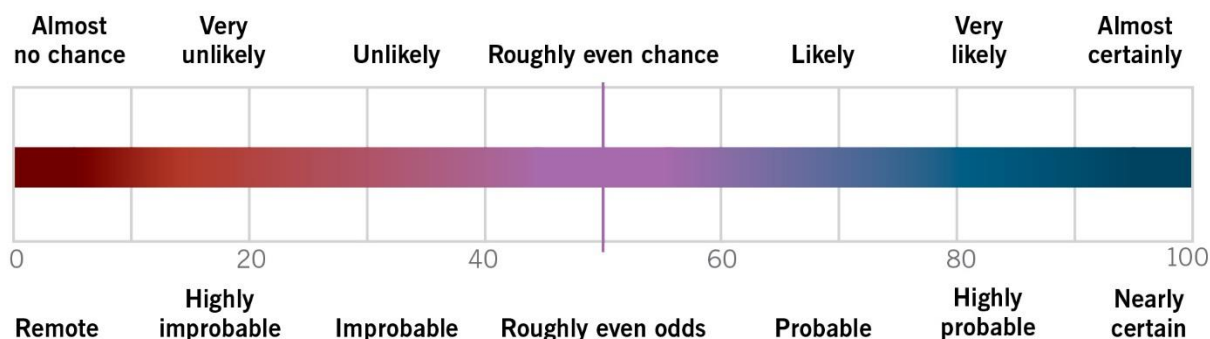
Annex B

ESTIMATIVE LANGUAGE

Estimative language consists of two elements: judgments about the likelihood of developments or events occurring and levels of confidence in the sources and analytic reasoning supporting the judgments. Judgments are not intended to imply that we have proof that shows something to be a fact. Assessments are based on collected information, which is often incomplete or fragmentary, as well as logic, argumentation, and precedents.

Judgments of Likelihood. The chart below approximates how judgments of likelihood correlate with percentages. Unless otherwise stated, the Intelligence Community's judgments are not derived via statistical analysis. Phrases such as "we judge" and "we assess"—and terms such as "probable" and "likely"—convey analytical assessments.

Percent



Confidence in the Sources Supporting Judgments. Confidence levels provide assessments of the quality and quantity of the source information that supports judgments. Consequently, we ascribe high, moderate, or low levels of confidence to assessments:

- **High confidence** generally indicates that judgments are based on high-quality information from multiple sources. High confidence in a judgment does not imply that the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong.
- **Moderate confidence** generally means that the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence.
- **Low confidence** generally means that the information's credibility and/or plausibility is uncertain, that the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or that reliability of the sources is questionable.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

This page intentionally left blank.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.



Exhibit 15

🕒 This article was published more than **1 year ago**

The Washington Post

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Michael Flynn cited for unauthorized foreign payments

Retired general and former Trump adviser was notified by the Army that it was seeking to recoup nearly \$40,000 from him

By [Dan Lamothe](#) and [Craig Whitlock](#)

July 8, 2022 at 5:00 a.m. EDT

Michael Flynn, the retired Army general and onetime adviser to President Donald Trump, was cited by the Defense Department inspector general for failing to disclose lucrative speaking engagements and other business arrangements with foreign entities, prompting the U.S. government to pursue tens of thousands of dollars in penalties against him, according to documents.

Investigators determined that Flynn received nearly \$450,000 from Turkish and Russian interests in 2015, including for an appearance in Moscow alongside President Vladimir Putin, but found no records that he had sought government approval beforehand. Their findings are detailed in a January 2021 memo to the Army released through the Freedom of Information Act on Thursday.

The Army notified Flynn in a May 2 letter, obtained by The Washington Post, that it would seek to recoup \$38,557.06 from him, zeroing in on money and in-kind compensation he received for a gala dinner celebrating the 10th anniversary of RT, the Kremlin-run news agency. Putin sat beside Flynn at the event and later told NBC News that he “didn’t even really talk to” him.

Flynn did not respond to a phone call and emails seeking comment.

Craig R. Schmauder, an Army lawyer, wrote in the letter that Flynn’s failure “to obtain the approvals of the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of State resulted in a violation of the Emoluments Clause,” a provision of the U.S. Constitution that prohibits retired military personnel from receiving money from foreign governments without prior authorization.

“When there is a finding that a military retiree has violated the Emoluments Clause, the United States Government may pursue a debt collection,” Schmauder wrote to Flynn.

Schmauder added that the Army was requesting that the Defense Financing Accounting Service “seek recoupment from you of a debt in the amount of \$38,557.06.” It was not clear why the Army sanctioned Flynn for the Moscow visit but not his other work.

Sean O’Donnell, the acting Defense Department inspector general, wrote in the January 2021 memo released Thursday that Defense Department regulations state that if a retired U.S. service member receives money from a foreign government without prior approval, it is considered “received by the retired member for the United States.”

“A debt in favor of the government is created which is to be collected by withholding from retired pay,” O’Donnell wrote.

In addition to the RT dinner in December 2015, O’Donnell’s memo highlights Flynn’s paid appearance at an October 2015 conference sponsored by Kaspersky Government Security Solutions, “an entity that appears to be controlled by the Russian government,” and Flynn’s work for Inovo BV, a corporation organized in the Netherlands that assisted the Turkish government.

The Army determined April 28 that Flynn violated the emoluments clause, Michael Brady, an Army spokesman, said in an email. The Army forwarded its findings to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, which calculates how much is owed and handles collection.

Flynn acknowledged the financial penalty in a television interview broadcast in May, saying the Defense Department was “going to reach into my retirement and ... take some money out.”

“Yeah, it means something, but at the end of the day, this country means a heck of a lot more than what they will do to me,” Flynn said then, suggesting the punitive action was politically motivated.

Flynn was Trump’s first national security adviser but became ensnared in the Justice Department’s investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 election. He abruptly left the White House just weeks into the administration, later pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russia’s ambassador to the United States, and then attempted to reverse course before Trump eventually pardoned him in November 2020.

After Trump’s defeat, Flynn suggested to Trump that he declare martial law and force a “rerun” of the contest in key states that went for President Biden.

The Defense Department inspector general’s investigation was opened in April 2017 but languished for years while Flynn was the subject of a criminal investigation.

O’Donnell, the acting inspector general, wrote in his memo that his investigation had been “held in abeyance since June 2017, pending the resolution of criminal allegations against LTG Flynn.” LTG stands for lieutenant general, Flynn’s rank when he retired from the Army in 2014.

After Trump pardoned Flynn, the Justice Department informed O’Donnell’s office “that their interest in this matter is moot” and that the inspector general’s office “may proceed in a manner we deem appropriate,” the memo said.

Exhibit 16

🕒 This article was published more than **2 years ago**

The Washington Post

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Army reviewing investigation into Michael Flynn's dealings with Russia, foreign firm



By [Dan Lamothe](#)

March 12, 2021 at 6:45 p.m. EST

The Defense Department's internal watchdog has concluded a long-delayed investigation into Michael Flynn, defense officials said Friday, sending its findings to the Army in a case that could bring tens of thousands of dollars in financial penalties for President Donald Trump's first national security adviser.

The investigation focuses on Flynn's acceptance of money from Russian and Turkish interests before joining the Trump administration, a potential violation of the Constitution's emoluments clause. With few exceptions, U.S. officials, including retired service members like Flynn, are prohibited from accepting money or gifts from foreign governments. Flynn [retired from the Army](#) as a three-star general in 2014.

The inspector general's investigation, [opened in April 2017](#), was put on hold for more than three years amid a broader scandal that included a criminal investigation of Flynn by the Justice Department — part of what would become the investigation of Trump's first presidential campaign and Russian interference in the 2016 election led by former FBI director Robert S. Mueller III.

Flynn was fired by the Trump administration for lying to Vice President Mike Pence about the case, pleaded guilty in December 2017 to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak, later attempted to take back his plea, and ultimately was [pardoned in November by Trump](#).

After Trump's pardon, the Justice Department gave approval for the Defense Department inspector general's office to resume its investigation, said Dwrena K. Allen, a spokeswoman for acting inspector general Sean O'Donnell. The watchdog's office closed its investigation one week after the Biden administration took office and forwarded its findings to the Army.

"On January 27, 2021, we closed our investigation against LTG Flynn and forwarded several administrative matters to the Acting Secretary of the Army for review and appropriate action," Allen's statement said. LTG stands for lieutenant general, Flynn's rank at retirement.